

AUNT MARY'S EXPERIMENT

By C. B. LEWIS

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People said of Aunt Mary Warner, "She was born that way and can't help it." In saying thus they referred to her faith in mankind and charity toward all. As the good wife of Farmer Moses Warner she fed more tramps every year than any ten farmers' wives combined, and whenever she heard any one complaining of the ingratitude of human nature she always had words of excuse. Her reputation as a "good soul" extended for twenty miles around, and the tramp who passed up or down the Red Bridge road without calling and reaping the benefits of her faith was in a hurry to outwalk the constable.

A few weeks before the farmer husband died he spent an hour casting up his accounts. When the wife expressed her curiosity he replied:

"We have been married going on nineteen years. In that time you have fed 3,000 tramps, you have let 400 tin peddlers get the best of you in buying your paper rags, you have given away 2,000 bushels of apples, you have gathered about a ton of mayweed, catnip and smartweed to give away to people too lazy to gather their own, you have done and done and done and you have given and given and given, and I'll be dogged if I can see where you are any better off!"

"But some one has got to be good to people in trouble," replied Aunt Mary. "Then give some one else a spell at it. You've done your share. This forenoon you fed a great big wall eye tramp."

"Yes, poor man, and when he had finished the tears stood in his eyes. He said I reminded him of his dead mother."

"Mebbe you did, but he went out through the garden and stole a shovel and a hoe. I tell you, Mary."

"Come, come, Moses," she interrupted, "we must do our duty as we see it, and if you'll turn the cat outdoors and wind the clock we'll go to bed. I'm pretty well tickered out with that big washing today."

Aunt Mary's faith neither increased nor decreased after the death of her husband. She went right along in the same old path, and the slices of bread and butter and the hunks of cold meat continued to be handed out. When asked by friends if she ever had met with one single instance of gratitude she would reply:

"No, I can't say that I have, but I expect to some day if I keep on. Some day I shall be the means of making a wicked man see the error of his ways and he'll bless me for it."

It was hardly three months after her husband's death that a man about thirty years old came along the highway at a late hour one night and when opposite Aunt Mary's house he climbed over the big gate to find the stable door on the latch. He was after a horse, and he found two in his stalls.

Unfortunately for him, one of them was a kicker, and the man had only laid hands on him when the equine lashed out with his heels and there was a yell of pain. The intruder's leg had been broken. He tried to crawl back to the highway, but the pain was too great. He suffered for half an hour, and then began to shout for help, and after awhile the hired man appeared with a lantern. It was no use for the man to deny his errand. If the hired man had been alone he might have tried a bluff, but when Aunt Mary appeared and he heard her kindly voice and caught sight of her motherly face he saw his way clear and at once threw himself upon her generosity.

"I'll get the constable, and we'll have him in jail inside of an hour," said the hired man, who wasn't feeling for his fellow man to any great extent, but Aunt Mary shook her head and replied: "We'll carry him into the house first, and then you go and get Dr. Walker."

"But he's a horse thief, and if Billy hadn't kicked him he might have got away with both of 'em."

"Yes, but don't you see how he must be suffering? I've always contended that a wicked man would come along some day and that what I would be able to do for him would change him into a better one. Poor fellow, how he must suffer!"

The stranger saw the opening at once and took advantage of it. He was the wicked man for whom she had long been looking. He had been a wicked man. He had done everything but cut throats and burn orphan asylums. He had been driven into such a career by seeing that no one cared for him. It had been over twenty years since any one had given him a kind word, while goldsmen or constables had ever stood ready to order him to move on and rap him on the head if he didn't. He had come to steal at least one of the horses, as he was ready to admit, and he had intended to continue his career of villainy to the end, but now that a woman had spoken kindly to him, now that he was being treated like a human being, now that—

But his voice choked up and the tears rushed to his eyes and he could say no more. The hired man had told the doctor about the affair, but the doctor made no comments until he had set the broken limb. Then he said to Aunt Mary:

"You should notify the authorities and have this fellow placed in charge of a constable until he can be removed to jail."

"But, doctor, he has repented of his

wickedness. He has given me his promise to reform."

"And you are idiot enough to believe him?"

"If he didn't mean what he says, would he shed tears?"

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Let him stay right here until his leg is all right, and then I'll help him choose a better path. I've always wanted to help some real wicked man to reform and to feel that he owed his reformation to me."

"Well, I guess you've got your wicked man right enough," observed the doctor as he made ready to go.

"And I'm going to win his gratitude and make a good man of him."

"Humph! Well, go ahead, but I shall have to look to you for my bill."

The story leaked out, and the sheriff called at Aunt Mary's and talked about arresting the stranger, but as he had committed no crime and as the woman would make no complaint the patient was left on her hands.

The man was tenderly nursed and given every comfort, and, being young and in the best of health, he was soon on the road to recovery. At the same time, according to his own statements and Aunt Mary's firm belief, he was also on the road to becoming a much respected citizen.

Now and then the doctor or the hired man took advantage of an occasion when the good woman was at the milk house to tell the patient that he was a fraud and a scoundrel, but on the whole the fellow had a good time of it. When he wasn't talking about his sainted mother in heaven he was promising to turn missionary and devote the rest of his life to the betterment of humanity, and Aunt Mary's heart was kept tender in his interest.

One day there came a drover to the Warner homestead, who brought cattle and sheep and hogs to the amount of \$800 and paid the cash. It was on this day that the stranger set a date for his departure and shed tears of gratitude. The hired man went along with the drover to help with the stock and at dark had not returned.

The stranger took the milk pails and went to the barnyard, but returned without them in a quarter of an hour. He had taken the interval to saddle one of the horses.

"What is it?" asked Aunt Mary as he came into the kitchen, where she was washing dishes.

"I want that \$300," he replied.

"You mean that you are going to rob me?"

"I mean that I'm going away to become a preacher, and I want it to start business on. I shall also take one of the horses."

Aunt Mary sat down and looked at him in a puzzled and bewildered way. The money was in the lower drawer of the bureau in her bedroom. The man walked in and got it and was stuffing it in his pocket as he came out.

"Say, now, but I'm much obliged to you, really I am—but you are so dead easy you know that I just can't help it. So long to you."

Half an hour later, when the hired man came to the room, he found Aunt Mary sitting with her head on the table.

"Why, Mr. Bell, felt that he had robbed her, and also felt that he had to find the horses and that \$300."

"What?" she asked.

"Whenever the United States has been at war with any other country it has always been a matter for serious complaint on the other side that the Americans take accurate aim before firing, with extremely fatal results. How excellent was the marksmanship of the volunteers on Bunker Hill is a matter of record. There is an interesting entry in the diary of John Harrower, an indentured schoolmaster of Virginia.

"Colonel Washington of this colony," he wrote, "being appointed generalissimo of all the American forces raised and to be raised, made a demand of 500 riflemen from the frontiers of this colony. But those that insisted on going far exceeded the number wanted, when, in order to avoid giving offense, the Commanding Officer chose his company by the following method.

"He took a board of a foot square and with chalk drew the shape of a moderate nose in the center and nailed it up to a tree at 150 yards distance, and those who came nearest the mark with a single ball was to go. But by the first forty or fifty that fired the nose was all blown out of the board, and by the time his company was up the whole board had shared the same fate."

"Patent Pending."

Although Miss Hobbs had lived her whole life in a New Hampshire village, she saw no reason why her horizon should be narrow or her circle small.

At the age of sixty she was relieved of the last of her family cares by the death of a paralytic. She then promptly joined the Society for Dispelling Gloom and began correspondence with other members in different parts of the country. She began to read and to write by mail to one of the Boston shops and at last announced her intention of going to the city for a day or two.

In the care of a Boston niece Miss Hobbs made a tour of the shops, but she intended to reserve her purchasing for the one that "had done so well by her through the mail."

"I've got a little list of things they've advertised special," said Miss Hobbs, and when they reached the desired shop she consulted the slip of paper she held tightly in her hand. Then she looked benevolently over her glasses at the young man behind the counter.

"Whereabouts am I? We find that patent pending? I see advertised on that new darning egg your folks sent me?" she asked him.

"It's such a curious name I'm all of a whew to see it."

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LIFE INSURANCE.

Its Early Struggles and Reverses in This Country.

The origin of insurance in this country dates from 1773 and had its first beginning in Philadelphia.

The first company was the Philadelphia Contribution for the Insurance of Houses from Losses by Fire, and its insignia was four clasped hands, which was its house badge. This mark may still be seen throughout eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey on old time houses. The company survived till 1847. In 1792 the first life insurance company was founded in the same city. It was called the Universal Tontine. The next year similar companies were started in Boston and in New York. Its avowed aim was "for the purpose of raising a fund upon lives to be applied to charitable and other uses." Its subscription books were opened on March 23, and five general agents were appointed.

Some business was done during the summer, but in November of that year a general meeting of the subscribers was called, and the idea of a general insurance company was suggested and met with approval. The proposition was referred to a committee, and at an adjourned meeting held at the state-house on Nov. 12 it was resolved that "the Universal Tontine association be and is hereby changed from its original object and converted into a society to be called the Insurance Company of North America." Its first policy was issued to John Maxwell Nesbitt, its president, for \$5,333.33. It wrote both fire and life insurance, but paid attention chiefly to the former and gradually dropped life insurance altogether.

In January, 1794, it considered the policy of insuring persons against capture by the Algerians and insured Captain John Collet "on his person against Algerians and other Barbary corsairs in a voyage from Philadelphia to London in the ship George Barclay, himself master, valuing himself at \$5,000." The premium charged was 2 per cent. Two similar policies were issued, but the premium was increased to 5 per cent. Two similar policies were issued, approved, one on the life of John Holker, from June 6 to Sept. 19, for \$24,000, at 1 1/2 per cent premium, and one on the life of Albert Briois de Beaumez, for eighteen calendar months, in the sum of \$5,000. The demand for insurance of life was light, and the business, which was finally abandoned by the first company, was not revived until 1820, when Hartford men took it up and kept it running till it gained the great prosperity of modern times.

Value of the Average Man.
Genius is a phenomenon; the average man is a law. He has seen Shakespeare and Goethe and Napoleon and Wagner rise and fall, and he goes on calmly, knowing that it is he and not they who are the race. Despite him, kick him as you will, the last word is with him. He is nature's favorite. Like a true mother, she loves her dull boy best. A Shakespeare was too much for her, but she saw to it that his faculty perished with him. He died, a wonder among men, and his family reverted to the average. Least the abhorred thing should reappear in the course of generations the family presently died out. The case is typical. It is almost a commonplace of the science of heredity that the appearance of extraordinary talent in any branch of a family means the extinction of that branch—London Standard.

"Robbing Peter to Pay Paul."
This saying had its origin in the rivalry between St. Peter's cathedral, now Westminster abbey, and St. Paul's, when, in 1550, an appropriation was made from St. Peter's to make good a deficiency in the accounts of St. Paul's. Much opposition was given to this, and it was for the time a popular outcry, "Why rob Peter to pay Paul?" The saying was revived as a proverb upon the death of William Pitt, earl of Chatham, in 1778. The city of London argued that so illustrious a statesman should be buried at St. Paul's, while parliament held that the remains of so great a leader should be placed with the dust of kings and that to bury him away from the Abbey of Westminster would be again a robbing of Peter to pay Paul.

One Sure Method.
There is a story of a medical student before a board of examiners to whom the question was put again and again of how he would produce perspiration in a patient. He proposed all sorts of things, to which one impertunate examiner always replied:

"Well, and if that would not do?"

"At last the poor young man, driven to his wits' end, exclaimed, 'I would send him before this board to be examined, and I warrant that would make him perspire.'"

The Obstacle.

"I came near eloping once," said the sweet young thing.

"Indeed?"

"Yes. We had quite made up our minds."

"Who?"

"Papa and I, but I could not find a man who would elope with me."

Appropriate.

Charles—I don't see how Blank can make any money out of that tobacco business of his. He's always smoking the best cigars himself. Fred—Oh, that's his method of advertising! Charles—How so? Fred—Why, putting his goods.

Safety.

He—Why does this theater have its orchestra concealed? She—Why? Just wait until you hear it play.

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